

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02
SAJ-01 IO-13 /074 W
-----240956Z 020028 /12

P R 211550Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1919

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSULATE MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

CONFIDENTIAL PRAGUE 0216

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, PFOR, CSCE, CZ

SUBJECT: CHARTER 77: THE FOREIGN CONNECTION

RF: A) STATE 13087 B) PRAGUE 0203

1. SUMMARY: BOTH SIDES IN THE STRUGGLE OVER CHARTER 77 HAVE NOW
FOCUSED ATTENTION ON FORCES OUTSIDE CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THE DISSIDENTS

STYMIED BY THE DIFFICULTY OF DISTRIBUTING THEIR MESSAGE WITHIN N SR
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AND FEELING THE PRESSURE OF SEARCHES, INTERROGATIONS AND THE OFFICIAL
PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST THM, HAVE AS IN THE PAST SOUGHT SUPPORT
ABROAD. THE REGIME, ANGERED BY THESE APPEALS TO OUTSIDE FORCES AND
BY WESTERN
PRESS COVERAGE OF CHARTER 77, HAS TRIED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT
THERE EXISTS A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TROUBLE-MAKERS AT HOME AND
ENEMIES OF THE WORKING CLASS AND OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK STATE ABROAD.

CHARTER 77 HAS ALREADY HAD AND WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE REPERCUSSIONS BEYOND CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S BORDERS. END SUMMARY.

2. IT SEEMS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT GOC HAD SOME ADVANCE WARNING THAT CHARTER 77 OR SOMETHING LIKE IT WAS PLANNED FOR THE EARLY DAYS OF 1977. JUST AS CHARTER 77 SURFACED IN THE WESTERN PRESS, THE CZECHOSLOVAK MEDIA BEGAN AN ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN TO DEFLECT

ATTENTION FROM IT. DISCREDIT ITS AUTHORS AND SIGNERS, TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE WHICH WOULD JUSTIFY THE TIGHTENING OF INTERNAL SECURITY. THE JANUARY 4 "ANNOUNCEMENT" OF THE ARREST OF JOSEF GROHMAN, (ACTUALLY ARRESTED IN OCTOBER, 1976), ON CHARGES OF ESPIONAGE, THE RESURRECTION OF AMERICAN DEFECTOR GLEN ROHRER (WHO DEFECTED IN 1965), THE SPY TRIALS OF FOUR OTHERS IN OSTRAVA ON SPY CHARGES, AND THE ARRIVAL IN CSSR OF AMERICAN SOLDIER PVT. WILLIAM JOSEF BLACK IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA WERE USED IN QUICK SUCCESSION IN THIS PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN WHICH LASHED OUT AT FOREIGN ESPIONAGE SERVICES, MEDIA, AND "IMPERIALISM" AND "REACTION" IN GENERAL.

3. IN THE MEANTIME, CHARTER 77 SIGNERS ZDENEK MLYNAR, PAVEL KOHOUT AND POSSIBLY OTHERS HAVE APPEALED TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND COMMUNIST LEADERS OF EUROPE FOR ASSISTANCE AND MEDIATION. THE ITALIAN AND BRITISH COMMUNIST PARTY PAPERS HAVE COME OUT IN OPPOSITION TO THE CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF CHARTER 77, WHILE THE PORTUGUESE CP ORGAN, WE UNDERSTAND FROM RUDE PRAVO, HAS CASTIGATED THE DISSIDENTS. ON JANUARY 21, 30 HUNGARIAN INTELLECTUALS WERE REPORTED TO HAVE DECLARED THEIR SOLIDARITY WITH CHARTER 77.

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4. BESIDES SHOWING THAT POST-1968 "NORMALIZATION" IS FAR FROM COMPLETE WITHIN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, THE REACTION TO CHARTER 77 ABROAD MAKES IT CLEAR THAT WHAT HAPPENS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA STILL REPRESENTS A TOUCHSTONE FOR THE EUROPEAN LEFT IN GENERAL AND WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES IN PARTICULAR. WHILE YEARS HAVE DULLED THE MEMORY OF 1968, CHARTER 77 SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED ABROAD AS AN EVENT WHICH CAN SERVE AS A LITMUS TEST FOR THE LEFT OF CENTER POLITICAL SPECTRUM.

5. AS FOR STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONN, IT SEEMS POSSIBLE, DEPENDING ON THE COURSE EVENTS TAKE IN COMING WEEKS, THAT CZECHOSLOVAKIA RELATIONS WITH WESTERN COUNTRIES COULD WELL WORSEN, AS THE GOVERNMENTS OF CERTAIN NATO AND NEUTRAL SIGNATORIES OF THE CSCE FINAL ACT MAY DECIDE THEY WOULD PREFER NOT TO BE SEEN ACTIVELY DEVELOPING BETTER RELATIONS WITH AN UNPOPULAR REGIME WHICH HAS

CLEARLY AND RECENTLY BEEN VIOLATING INTERNATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED NORMS IN AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS. IN THIS CONNECTION IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT GASTON THORN, WHO VISITED PRAGUE IN JANUARY IN HIS CAPACITY AS LUXEMBOURG FOREIGN MINISTER, BUT WHO NATURALLY SPOKE WITH THE AUTHORITY OF HIS PREMIERSHIP AS WELL, OUTSPOKENLY CRITICIZED THE CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT'S DENIAL OF FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY OF THE NETHERLANDS, LUXEMBOURG'S PROTECTING POWER, THORN ALSO BROUGHT UP SUBJECT OF TREATMENT ON DISSIDENTS IN HIS TALKS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK AND WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER SPACIL. IN HIS REMARKS AFTER AN OFFICIAL DINNER AT WHICH HIGH CZECHOSTOVAK OFFICIALS WERE PRESENT, THORN REPORTEDLY SAID HE "COULD NOT BELIEVE" THERE WERE STILL GOVERNMENTS IN THE WORLD WHICH CONCERNED THEMSELVES "DOWN TO THE LAST DETAIL" WITH WHAT PEOPLE THINK. THE CZECHOSLOVAK SIDE REMAINED SILENT AND NO AFTER-DINNER REMARKS WERE CARRIED IN THE PRESS THE NEXT DAY.

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6. NETHERLANDS EMBASSY IS EXPECTING A VISIT TO PRAGUE BY THE DUTCH FOREIGN MINISTER BEGINNING FEBRUARY 28. EMBASSY OFFICIALS ARE WONDERING WHETHER IT MIGHT BE POSTPONED. AUSTRIAN DCM HAS OPINED THAT CHARTER 77 ISSUE MAY ALSO CAUSE POSTPONEMENT OF PREMIER STROGAL'S VISIT TO VIENNA, SAID TO BE SCHEDULED FOR APRIL. ANOTHER VISIT WHICH WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE MIGHT BE STILL FURTHER DELAYED IS THE LONG-PLANNED TRIP OF PRESIDENT HUSAK TO THE FRG WHICH WE UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, IS NOT SLATED UNTIL MID-YEAR. WE ARE ADDRESSING THE QUESTION OF U.S.-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE.

7. CZECHOSLOVAK FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS ANNOUNCED A PRESS CONFERENCE MONDAY, JANUARY 24, AT WHICH QUESTION OF CHARTER 77 WILL REPORTEDLY BE ADDRESSED. GOC HAS DOUBTLESS CALLED THIS CONFERENCE PARTLY TO RESPOND TO INCREASING FOREIGN CRITICISM REGARDING THE CURRENT STRUGGLE HERE OVER HUMAN RIGHTS.

BYRNE

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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